

Hebrews 6:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

Analysis

God 'interposed with an oath' (Greek 'emesiteusen' - mediated with an oath) to show the 'unchangeableness of His counsel' to the 'heirs of promise.' God's purpose ('boulē') is immutable - He doesn't change His mind (Numbers 23:19). The oath adds nothing to God's truthfulness but accommodates human weakness. Reformed theology sees this as demonstrating God's condescension and the security of election - God's purpose to save His chosen cannot fail.

Historical Context

The 'heirs of promise' initially referred to Isaac, then Israel, now includes all who believe (Galatians 3:29). God's oath to Abraham extends to all his spiritual descendants.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the unchangeableness of God's counsel affect your assurance of salvation?
2. Why did God add an oath to His already certain word, and what does this reveal about His character?

Interlinear Text

ἐν Ὡ περισσότερον βουλόμενος ὁ θεὸς ἐπιδεῖξαι
Wherein G3739 more abundantly willing G3588 God to shew
G1722 G4054 G1014 G2316 G1925

τοῖς κληρονόμοις τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς
G3588 unto the heirs G3588 of promise G3588 the immutability G3588
G2818 G1860 G276

βουλῆς αὐτοῦ ἐμεσίτευσεν ὅρκω
counsel G846 confirmed it by an oath
G1012 G3315 G3727

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 6:18 (References God): That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

Proverbs 19:21 (Parallel theme): There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.

Hebrews 11:9 (Covenant): By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

Isaiah 55:11 (Parallel theme): So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Isaiah 14:24 (Parallel theme): The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

Psalms 110:4 (Parallel theme): The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Psalms 33:11 (Parallel theme): The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

John 10:10 (Parallel theme): The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Hebrews 6:12 (Covenant): That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Hebrews 6:16 (Parallel theme): For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

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